

## Lt. Governor Garamendi Celebrates Opening of Honduran Health Clinic

*John and Patti Garamendi Returned This Week from Ciriboya, Honduras*

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**Ciriboya, Honduras** – Lt. Governor John Garamendi and his wife, Patti, joined the people of Ciriboya, Honduras this week in celebrating the opening of a community hospital in this coastal part of the mostly impoverished, Latin American country. The new, comprehensive health center will serve this region of 80,000 people and be dedicated to the needs of the country's Garifuna people. Before the clinic opening, villagers had to travel 4 hours to reach health care services. Funding for the clinic was made possible by members of Sacramento's labor community and their allies, who provided all the materials for the buildings, and trained the Garifuna community members who completed the building work.

"As Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia, Patti and I learned 40 years ago that we are a stronger nation at home when we help our friends abroad," said Lt. Governor John Garamendi. "We are pleased to see so many Californians coming together to help provide desperately needed health care to this distressed region of Honduras."

"We are so grateful for the hard work and generosity of the people of California that made this clinic a reality," said Jesus Figueroa Cacho, a Sacramento resident who was born and raised in Honduras. "This clinic can truly mean the difference between life and death for the people of Ciriboya."

"At the core of what we do in the labor community is to enable each individual to be a success, regardless of their heritage. I am proud of the work our unions have done to strengthen the relationship between the local unions in California and the home communities of the immigrant workers that contribute so much to the success of our state," said Bill Camp, Executive Secretary, Sacramento Central Labor Council, AFL CIO and President and Founder of the California/Honduran Institute for Medical and Educational Support.

John and Patti Garamendi traveled to Honduras with members of the Sacramento Labor Council, whose leader, Bill Camp created the nonprofit, California/Honduran Institute for Medical and Educational Support (CHIMES) to build health clinics across Honduras. Construction of the Ciriboya clinic began in 2005, when Bill Camp and Bud McKinney, vice president of the Sheet Metal Workers Local 162, met with village leaders and assisted the community in securing a site and building materials and organizing construction of the clinic.

Before the trip, Mr. and Mrs. Garamendi assisted Northern California labor unions, ILWU Local 17, Teamsters Local 150 and ILWU local 10 in preparing 40,000 pounds of rice donated by the Farmers Rice Co-op in Sacramento, for delivery to Honduras people affected by recent floods. The rice is currently in route to Honduras.

Support of the Honduran health clinic effort is a continuation of the Garamendis' lifetime of humanitarian work abroad. In the 1960s, both served as Peace Corps volunteers in Ethiopia. In 1985 John and Patti returned to Ethiopia to assist in famine relief efforts. Garamendi later led a group of returned Peace Corps volunteers on a peace mission during the Ethiopian Eritrea war in 1998-2000. His five member team met with Ambassadors, Foreign Ministers, and the Heads of State of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Many of their proposals formed the basis for the eventual peace treaty.

During the Clinton Administration, Patti Garamendi served for five years as the Associate Director of the US Peace Corps then operating in 93 countries, and two years as Deputy Administrator of the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service where she worked on world food security, famine, refugee relief, International Cooperation, and Development. Mrs. Garamendi was elected Vice-Chair of the United Nation's Committee on Food Security. She is a Trustee of the America the Beautiful Fund which started Operation Green Plant, a program that has grown over 1.75 billion pounds of food for the hungry.

In 1998 Patti was a member of the U.S. government team that assisted in recovery efforts in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch devastated vast regions of the country. Patti Garamendi also currently serves as a board member of ACDI/VOCA, an international organization assisting the development of agricultural cooperatives in developing countries.

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